

2015 Capital Improvements Program (CIP) Committee

The Capital Improvements Program (CIP) Committee wrapped up its work on October 3rd, with a total project cost for 2015 of \$415,000. This represents a \$5,000 increase from the 2014 schedule.

New Boston's CIP Committee works to develop a six-year schedule of capital projects and purchases that reflect the town and school needs as well as the taxpayers' ability to afford. Through the use of Capital Reserve Funds (CRFs), taxpayers have supported yearly allotments for fire and highway vehicles and equipment as well as bridges, preventing huge spikes in the tax rate for the year these expensive items need to be funded.

The CIP schedule represents projects and purchases that cost \$20,000 or more. Unless there is an unforeseen emergency, any new project comes onto the schedule six years out.

It is expected that the Selectmen will bring forward to the March 2015 ballot the CIP items scheduled for that year. Voters are encouraged to consider these requests carefully.

Over the years, the CIP Committee believes departments have been judicious in bringing forth only what is truly needed, not "wish list" items. Additionally, the Committee feels the costs reflected represent sound estimates. These estimates are fine tuned as the year for their inclusion on the ballot arrives.

Most of the projects on the CIP schedule have been discussed for many years. There were no new items introduced to the schedule.

New Boston is one of the few towns in New Hampshire that has no debt on either the town or school side. The use of CRFs, yearly funds for road and bridge work, prudent planning by department heads and support of voters have made this possible.

Fire Department Vehicles CRF

This yearly CRF includes both replacement and mid-life refurbishment of all Fire Department vehicles except the ambulance, which is purchased through a separate, non-taxpayer ambulance fund.

The vehicles include two front-line pumpers and a preowned pumper at the Hilltop Station, a tank truck, a hose reel truck, a forestry truck and a light rescue vehicle.

All of these vehicles are extremely expensive, with pumpers costing upward of \$600,000. One issue pushing their cost is the need for a custom truck that will fit into our smaller fire station.

Luckily, with a midlife refurbishment, these pumpers generally have a 25-year life cycle. The other vehicles also have 15 to 30 year cycles. While this is good on one hand, it makes projecting future costs problematic. Currently, the 1991 pumper is scheduled for replacement in 2016 at an estimated cost of \$632,000 and the 1988 Tank Truck in 2018, estimated at \$342,000.

While these replacements will be pushed out if they are still in good shape, we must be financially prepared for their replacement.

The CIP Committee carefully reviews this schedule yearly, attempting to account for any known increases in vehicle costs. The Committee feels strongly that it is prudent to increase the yearly CRF contribution from \$100,000 to \$110,000 in 2015.

Fire Station Bond

Fire Chief Dan MacDonald reported that the Fire Wards and Selectmen are still investigating properties near the village that might be appropriate for a new Fire Station.

The backup plan would still be a rebuilding on their current site.

Chief MacDonald hopes to have a final decision and plans for the 2016 ballot, with an estimated cost of \$1.6 million.

Highway Dump Truck CRF

This yearly CRF stays the same at \$70,000. This fund covers five full-sized 6-wheel dump trucks (\$240,000), one smaller 6-wheel truck (\$125,000) and one 10-wheel truck (\$295,000).

Replaced trucks are often kept as spare plow trucks.

For the past two years, Road Agent Dick Perusse has had good success in finding preowned trucks as our replacements at great savings to the town. However, their life cycle is automatically reduced.

An excellent maintenance program has also lengthened the life cycle of the entire fleet of trucks.

Mr. Perusse noted that in 2015, he would probably try to replace the 1997 truck with another preowned vehicle. The money would be taken directly from the CRF to cover the cost.

Highway Heavy Equipment CRF

This yearly CRF remains the same at \$50,000. The CRF covers the replacement cost of the grader, loader and backhoe.

The 2005 Loader, at an estimated cost of \$210,000, is tentatively scheduled for replacement in 2017.

Road Improvements

For the past few years, this \$85,000 yearly allotment has been applied to upgrades on Old Coach Road. The remaining work is the expensive and more complicated work at the beginning of the road, the hill coming off Route 13, that will involve outside engineering because of the significant drainage issues.

Selectman Rodney Towne said that his Board would be considering placing the entire cost of this part of the project on the 2015 ballot. The money would be taken from the town's unreserved fund balance, held at the state level, and not have a new tax impact.

This approach would allow the work to be completed in one year on this very heavily traveled town road.

With Old Coach Road taken care of, the Road Agent would be able to use the 2015 request for \$85,000 for needed repairs on Bedford Road.

This yearly funding of roadwork is one of the things that has prevented New Boston from needing multi-million dollar bonds to repair severely deteriorated roads.

Town Bridge Repair/Replacement CRF

This yearly CRF will remain at its current funding of \$40,000.

The Hilldale Lane Bridge into the fairgrounds was again delayed, but is still in the schedule for this fall.

In 2015, voters will be asked to withdraw approximately \$67,000 from the CRF for replacements of the large culvert on Lyndeborough Road, at the entrance to Towne's gravel pit.

Road Agent Dick Perusse has received detailed estimates for all the work involved with this project.

Upcoming projects to be funded by this CRF are the large Bedford Road culverts at Foxberry Lane (2016), repairs to Howe Bridge (2020) and Tucker Mill Road bridge (2023).

Easement issues with the state that have held up the Riverdale Road Bridge project, that was funded separately from this CRF, have finally been resolved. Mr. Perusse expects bids to go out in January 2015, with construction later in the spring. The state covers 80% of the total replacement cost.

Highway Salt Shed

The Road Agent again wants to push this project back, potentially asking voters' approval for funding in 2016 and 2017. He continues to work on refining the cost as much as possible.

Town Hall CRF

Speaking for the Board of Selectmen, Town Administrator Peter Flynn reviewed the continuing upgrade work proposed for the Town Hall. This phase will focus on the basement.

Original key components of this project include piping and de-watering of the ground water that exists nine months of the year, threatening all mechanical systems and creating an unhealthy environment.

Also included in the scope is excavation for the placement of a vapor barrier, foam insulation, sand layer, a concrete mud-slab, and raising of the fuel tank and boilers.

Mr. Flynn noted that they would now like to include a new boiler. Although the current boilers were replaced in 2009 after flooding that year destroyed the old ones, these boilers, if running together, produce three times the BTUs required for the areas being heated.

It has been determined that the current furnaces are not efficient and a three-pass design that is properly sized for the area being heated is recommended. This upgrade alone would reduce fuel consumption by approximately one-third. A new boiler would also allow the old boiler pit to be filled and the two sump pumps to be discontinued. The current system uses two constant speed circulator pumps, one of which has failed due to improper installation, and more electricity than needed is being consumed.

The chimney being used is too large for the boilers, wasting additional heat and causing condensation resulting in corrosion and premature failure. The chimney lining was put in place back when the Town Hall was heated with coal!

Replacing the circulator pump with a single variable speed unit would also increase efficiency, use less electricity and produce some additional fuel savings. Additionally, two zone valves and programmable thermostats would be installed, again reducing fuel consumption.

Committee member Matt Beaulieu, a superintendent with Milestone Engineering and Construction, volunteered to review the current estimate of \$90,000. After a review of the basement and discussions with subcontractors, Mr. Beaulieu presented his findings to Mr. Flynn and the CIP Committee.

His estimate came to a little over \$86,000, including a 10% contingency. Because of the age of the Town Hall building, the Committee agreed to leave the \$90,000 in place for now.

Last year, voters approved \$45,000 to partially fund the project. This was added to approximately \$6,000 left in the CRF from another project. The final \$40,000 will be requested in March 2015.

Property Update/Reval Funding

The next update of town-wide property is scheduled for 2016, with the more expensive full reval in 2021.

The current \$20,000 will be requested in 2015; increasing to \$30,000 in 2016 toward the full reval.

NBCS Addition Bond

SAU Superintendent Brian Balke, who is also a New Boston resident, discussed the situation at the New Boston Central School with the CIP Committee.

The Demographic Study that the School Board had conducted in the spring showed that the actual student population at the Central School should begin to decrease within the next five years.

Currently, however, there is a significant space issue, pushed by the room needed to serve special needs students. While working with these students in-house is a financially sound approach, it does require additional space to appropriately provide the services required.

The School Board recognized that space was critical right now and that they should not wait for a possible future addition to address the situation.

The School Board voted to purchase a two-classroom portable. This will not only allow the half-day kindergarten that had been in the White Buildings to return to the school, but will also provide additional space needed for special education services.

Mr. Balke noted that this will allow them to see if the Demographic Study projections hold true before moving ahead with a million dollar-plus addition.

Because a Space Needs Committee for the school has just been appointed, he wants to move the addition out for another year. He felt the Committee's work will give them a better projection by next year.

Transfer Station Food Waste Composting System

Last year, Transfer Station Manager Gerry Cornett introduced a mechanical food waste composting system for the CIP schedule. It was placed in 2019, with funding over two years.

As requested by the Committee, Mr. Cornett came with much more research and information.

There was lengthy and productive discussion of this program, projected to reduce up to 30% of the tonnage of waste the Town sends to the incinerator. The incinerator's tipping fees and the trucking are the most costly portion of the Transfer Station budget.

Mr. Cornett again noted that he has received interest from surrounding towns about paying to use our facility once it's established.

The proposed system would cost approximately \$140,000 and he felt it would have a five to seven year payback. Mr. Cornett said he was also looking into several grant possibilities that might partially or fully pay for the system.

He noted that the system would need additional voluntary separation by residents, but no increase in personnel at the Transfer Station.

Several options for homeowner collection were also discussed.

The CIP Committee agreed to put the project on the schedule starting in 2019, with the estimated \$140,000 funding spread over two years.

CIP Committee

Brandy Mitroff, Chairman, Finance Committee Representative

Ken Lombard, Finance Committee Representative

Don Duhaime, Planning Board Representative

Rodney Towne, Selectman Ex-Officio

Matt Beaulieu, At-Large

Fred Hayes, At-Large

Jon Strong, At-Large